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## GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Geographical Spelling.—If, as Dogberry says, to write and read comes by nature, it is at least quite certain that nature does not know much about spelling, as applied to geography. There is so far but one recognized principle which seems to be followed with some steadiness; and that is, to adopt the native orthography for names of places in countries which use the Roman alphabet.

This principle is applied to all the Western Continent, to all Europe, with the exception of Russia, the Balkan States, Turkey, and Greece, and to many of the European colonies.

The countries which still use some form of the Gothic character come under this rule, for the reason that the Gothic is not a true character, but a mere distortion of the Roman form. Every sound represented by a Gothic letter is represented equally by the corresponding simpler Roman letter, and the manifest disadvantage of keeping up a distinction which is no distinction is so great that German and Danish and Swedish scholars have gone over, almost in a body, to the side of common-sense and the Roman alphabet.

Exceptions to the general principle just stated will occur to every one; but they are all concessions to long-settled habit.

There is no reason, logical or sentimental, why Roma,

Firenze, London, Edinburgh, New York, München, Wien, and Lisboa should not be written unaltered in every language that uses the Latin alphabet. The foreign name is sure to be incorrectly pronounced in any case, but it might always be correctly and uniformly written and printed; and this would be no slight gain. To introduce uniformity of practice in this matter among most of the Europeans and all of the Americans is in the power of the first nation that sets the example.

It is less easy to deal with names written in the Greek or the Russian character; but the difficulty lies not so much in finding what Latin letters shall represent a given Greek or Russian letter as in agreeing upon the value of the combined letters; whether, that is, they shall be given their German, or their French, or their English value. There is as yet no tribunal to settle this question, or the still more difficult one of how to arrange, for the use of those who employ the Latin alphabet, a system that shall render the Oriental names and sounds in a spelling recognized by all.

To attempt too much would be to fail; but an entirely practicable reform lies within reach. This is to establish rules by which those who write in English shall be guided in spelling the names of strange places, so that all those who read English shall be able to pronounce them in the same way.

One or two examples, taken at random from the "Gazetteer," will show what is the existing confusion in this matter.

Ha-Noi, in Annam, is known also by the following names: Ketcho, Kesho, Cachao, Kecho, Cacheo, and Bakthian, and Baktean. All these forms are found in English books.

Voronezh, a well-known Russian city, is found in English under these additional shapes: Voronej, Voronej, Voronej, Voronetz, Woronetz, and Woronesch.

As matters now stand the traveller or reader has no authority to guide him, either in spelling or in pronunciation.

The Royal Geographical Society adopted in 1885 a system, intended to supply the want of an English standard for the orthography of names not written, in the countries to which they belong, in the Roman character. The rules laid down in this system are in part excellent, but they might be improved by a thorough application. Exceptions are out of place in a radical reform.

The rules adopted are:

- 1.—No change to be made in the spelling of names in countries which use Roman letters.
- 2.—No change to be made in the spelling of names familiar by long usage to English readers, though belonging to languages not written in the Roman character: as Calcutta, Cutch, Celebes, Mecca.
- 3.—The true sound of the word as locally pronounced to be taken as the basis of the spelling.
- 4.—An approximation, however, to the sound is alone aimed at.
- 5.—The broad features of the system are that vowels are pronounced as in Italian, and consonants as in English.
- 6.—One accent only is used, the acute, to decide the syllable on which stress is laid.
- 7.—Every letter is pronounced. When two vowels come together, each one is sounded clearly, however rapidly.
- 8.—Indian names are accepted as in Hunter's "Gazetteer."

In detail these rules are as follows:

a—ah, a in father; Java, Banána, Somáli, Bari.

e—eh, e in benefit; Tel-el-Kebir, Otétch, Yezo, Medina, Levúka Peru.

i—English e; i as in ravine; the sound of ee in beet; Fiji, Hindi.

o—o as in mote; Tokio.

u—long u as in flute; the sound of oo in boot; Zulu, Sumatra.

All vowels are shortened in sound by doubling the following consonant: Yarra, Tanna, Mecca, Jidda, Bonny.

Doubling of a vowel is only necessary where there is a distinct repetition of the single sound: Nuulúa, Oosima.

ai—English i as in ice; Shanghai.

au—ow as in how; Fuchau.

ao—slightly different from above; Macao.

ei—is the sound of the two Italian vowels, but is frequently slurred over, when it is scarcely to be distinguished from ey in the English they; Beirút, Beilúl.

b—English b.

c—is always soft, but is so nearly the sound of s that it should be seldom used; Celebes. If *Celebes* were not already recognized it would be written *Selebes*.

ch—is always soft as in church; Chingchin.

d—English d.

f—English f; ph should not be used for the sound of f; Haifong, Nafa.

g—is always hard (soft g is given by j); Galápagos.

h—is always pronounced when inserted.

j—English j; Dj should never be put for this sound; Japan, Jinchuen.

k—English k; it should always be put for the hard c; Korea.

kh—the Oriental guttural; Khan.

gh—is another guttural as in the Turkish Dagh, Ghazi.

$$\left.\begin{array}{c} 1\\ m\\ n \end{array}\right\}$$
—as in English.

ng—has two separate sounds, one hard as in the English word *finger*, the other as in *singer*; as these two sounds are rarely employed in the same locality, no attempt is made to distinguish between them.

p—as in English.

q—should never be employed; qu is given as kw; Kwangtung.

y—is always a consonant, as in *yard*, and therefore should never be used as a terminal, *i* or *e* being substituted. Thus, not Mikindány, but Mikindáni; not Kwaly, but Kwale.

z—English z; Zulu.

Accents should not generally be used, but where there is a very decided emphatic syllable or stress, which affects the sound of the word, it should be marked by an *acute* accent: Tongatábu, Galápagos, Paláwan, Saráwak.

The second rule is clearly wrong. Who is to decide what is meant by long usage? The words given as illustrations fall readily and properly into their places when spelled: Kalkutta, Kutch, Mekka, Selebes.

The third and fourth rules are in reality but one, and might, even then, be suppressed. It is, in any case,

only an approximation to the true name that can be made; for where no common standard exists, what certainty is possible? The speaker is one, as the Arab says, and the hearer is another; some men articulate badly in speaking, and others have a dull sense of hearing. What becomes of the true local pronunciation in such cases? The eighth rule, establishing Hunter's "Gazetteer" as the authority for the spelling of Indian names, is no rule at all, for it brings the student face to face with a dilemma like the famous one in the story of the Alexandrian Library. Either the "Gazetteer" agrees with the rules, and then it is superfluous; or it contradicts them, and then it is pernicious.

The system, it ought not to be forgotten, is intended to establish principles for the guidance of the Englishspeaking peoples; and it should carry with it its own explanations. There should be no place in the alphabet for diphthongs like those given, ai, au, ao, ei. one sufficient rule has been already laid down, that every vowel is to be pronounced. The letter c should be thrown out as unnecessary. Celebes should be written Selebes, and Comoro, Komoro. Practice, moreover, should The letter y, it is said, is always go with precept. a consonant, and must not be used as a terminal; but the name Bonny appears among the examples, a few lines above. Consistency in practice has also its value. Mikindány be Why should corrected Mikindáni, and Kwaly be made Kwale? The terminal i is surely sufficient.

It falls properly to the Royal Geographical Society to perfect the work, of which it has made so good a beginning. THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.—The American Geographical Society is constantly receiving communications with the address:

"New York,

"United States of North America."

It ought to be known by this time, in most parts of the civilized world, that there is no such country.

The name of the American Union is the one given at the head of this note, and to thrust in the word *North* is to betray a lack of the elementary information, supposed to be general in these days of geographical study.

London, it may be well to say, is not in "England of Europe," nor is Berlin in the "German Empire of the North."

Divisions of the Southeastern U. S.—Mr. Gilbert Thompson, of the U. S. Geological Survey, suggests, in a communication to the Philosophical Society of Washington, the adoption of designations corresponding with the topographical features of the sections in the Southeastern States of the Union.

In this Appalachian region, he says, the drainage does not afford the best unit for the purposes of the physical geographer. There is, however, a remarkable line known as the "fall-line," the natural boundary of a division. Every river in the Eastern United States, south of New England, ceases to be rapid as it nears the sea and becomes broad and slow-moving. Where this change takes place, there is usually a fall or rapid.

This is always the lower limit of water power and often the upper limit of navigation, and it is the natural seat of cities and towns of importance. In its northern portion it is at the head of tide, and it nowhere exceeds 200 feet in altitude. From the fall-line to the sea is a region with a gentle slope, traversed by slow-moving rivers and fringed at almost a dead level by deltas, swamps, and everglades.

This region Mr. Thompson, with courage worthy of a better cause, entitles the "coastal plains," including as subdivisions the Atlantic plains and the Gulf plains.

The area bounded by the fall-line, the Mississippi and Ohio, and a part of the drainage divide of the Laurentian lakes, he calls in a broad sense the Appalachian region, and divides it into three distinct sections.

From the Ohio southeastward, and from the Mississippi eastward, the country gradually rises to 2,500 feet above the sea, and is then cut off by an escarpment facing to the southeast and about 1,200 feet in height. This plateau Mr. Thompson proposes to call the "Cumberland plateau." It is a table-land deeply cut by a system of ramifying drainage. At the north the surface is somewhat rolling, and the plateau ends at the south in long finger-like spurs. The streams generally rise near the edge of the escarpment and flow toward the northwest. The Potomac, however, flows eastward, and the New and the Tennessee rivers flow westward.

From the Cumberland plateau eastward to the eastern foot of the Blue Ridge is the "Appalachian region," definitely so called. This is characterized by long, narrow mountain ridges, closely parallel, and sinking to the rank of hills in the great valley which traverses the region from north to south. At the north the principal mountain area is west of this valley and the Blue Ridge is east of it. At the south the valley is close to the Cumberland plateau.

The third section is the "Piedmont region," an undu-

lating plain, with low spurs from the mountains and occasional isolated hills. The streams here are rapid and the topographic relief diminishes toward the fall-line.

Mr. Thompson's classification needs, most of all, a good commodity of names, for the burden laid upon the Appalachian region is greater than it can bear. The essential thing is to have one name for one region; but any extended composition, in which Mr. Thompson's divisions were adopted as they now stand, would call for a perpetual commentary.

CHAMPLAIN CANAL.—L'Esplorazione Commerciale, of Milan, has information of a plan formed in the United States for a canal to unite the Hudson and the St. Lawrence rivers by way of Lake Champlain. This canal, it is thought, will permit ships to pass directly from New York to Montreal, and will enable them to avoid the difficult and dangerous navigation of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the ascent of the great river. It will allow ships of 1,000 tons to go from New York to Chicago through the great lakes, Michigan, Erie, and Ontario, so that Chicago, distant though it be from the ocean, will become a seaport. The great inland city, which has already sent cargoes of grain direct to Liverpool, may receive the news of its coming sea-change with calmness; but the people of New York, with whom it is an article of faith that the Champlain Canal was finished in the year 1822, will wait with some impatience for more precise details from Milan, where it has been found necessary to print the notice of this enterprise in two separate numbers of L'Esplorazione Commerciale.

The unassisted American intellect finds itself bewil-

dered in attempting to grasp the idea of a plan which places Lake Erie to the east of Lake Ontario and Lake Ontario itself far to the west of Lake Michigan, and forgets to speak, even in a disrespectful way, of Lake Huron.

It is, perhaps, not irrelevant to remind the Milanese geographical journal that the Tagliamento is not the outlet of the Lago di Como, and that it were in vain to look for the Lago di Garda to the northwest of Lago Maggiore.

The Sources of the Mississippi.—The Minnesota Historical Society, of St. Paul, on the 13th of December, 1886, ordered an investigation of the claim put forward by Capt. Willard Glazier to the discovery of the source of the Mississippi, and now publishes the report of the Hon. James H. Baker on the subject.

This report is less than complimentary to Capt. Glazier, and the Society, after adopting it, passed several resolutions, one of which reads:

"Resolved, That we call upon the various geographical, historical, and other learned societies throughout the world to join with us in repudiating Glazier's claims, and ask them, in the spirit of right and truth, that if they have in their possession maps with the lake in question so named (Lake Glazier), they erase Glazier's name from them and substitute therefor that of "Elk Lake."

Kosmos.—The first number of this handsome monthly was issued at San Francisco, February 1, 1887, by the Kosmos Publishing Co., C. Mitchell Grant, F.R.G.S., editor.

Kosmos is the official organ of the Geographical Society of the Pacific, and contains, besides the Report of the Society's Annual Meeting, a paper on "Mt. St. Elias," by Mr. Seton-Karr, who accompanied Lt. Schwatka's expe-

dition, and one by Prof. George Davidson, on the "Submarine Valleys of the Pacific Coast." Prof. Davidson marks three of these valleys. The first, off Shelter Cove, 30 miles S. of Cape Mendocino, is 100 fathoms deep at its head, 1¼ miles from shore, and 25 fathoms at the rocks almost under the cliffs; but where it breaks through the marginal plateau the depth reaches 400 fathoms. The sides of this valley are very steep.

Midway between this and Point Gorda is a minor submarine valley of from 300 to 150 fathoms deep; and immediately N. of the point a very deep valley comes in from the W. S.W. and heads close to the shore. The head of this second valley is  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile from the shore— $40^{\circ} 18' 30''$  N. Lat. The depth of 100 fathoms in the valley is only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from shore, and the sides are remarkably steep. The opening through the 100-fathom plateau is 520 fathoms deep.

A little nearer to Cape Mendocino is the third valley, which comes in from the W. The depth of 100 fathoms in this is only  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a mile outside of the regular 25-fathom coast line, and five miles S. by E. from Cape Mendocino light-house. The 450-fathom sounding in the entrance to this valley is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles S.W. by S. from Cape Mendocino. The bottom is green mud.

Steam coasting vessels bound for Humboldt Bay, when they get as far as Shelter Cove in fogs, common on that coast, haul inshore to find soundings, and may be lost through ignorance of these deep valleys.

Through these, also, Prof. Davidson believes, the deepsea fauna must be brought under the shores with the colder waters coming down the coast outside of the inshore eddy current to the northward. LAKE MISTASSINI.—The Annual Report of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada, Vol. I., for 1885, gives the results of the exploration of this lake in 1884.

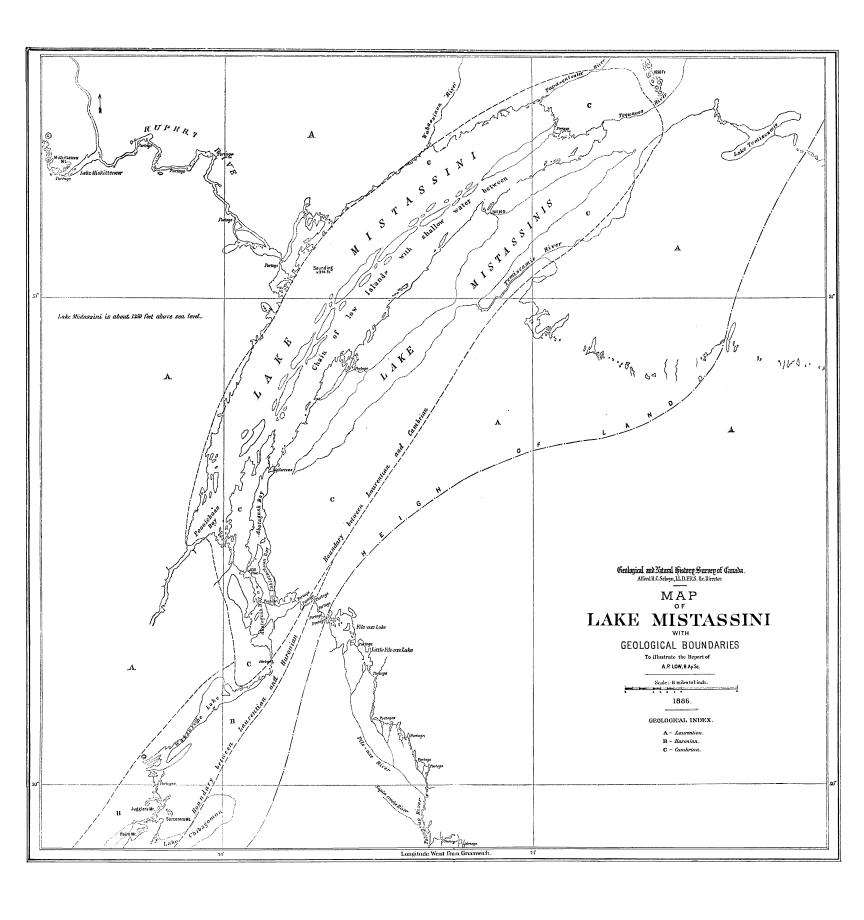
The lake is long and narrow, and lies N.E. and S.W., between 50° and 51° 24′ N. Lat., and 72° 45′ and 74° 20′ W. Lon. It is somewhat curved in shape, with the concave side towards the S.E. Its length in a straight line between the extremities of the N.E. and S.W. bays is nearly 100 miles, and the average breadth of the main body is about 12 miles. From end to end of the lake is a chain of rocky islands, almost like a ridge, dividing the water into two parts; and these islands so overlap each other as almost to cut off the view of the opposite shore from either side. From island to island the water is very shallow, but between the islands and the shore it is said to be everywhere deep.

The two soundings reported gave 374 and 279 feet. The shore line is indented with bays, more numerous and more irregular in the western part.

Many streams flow into the lake, but the shores are mostly rocky, and without beach or marshes. The elevation above the sea is 1,350 feet.

The climate is severe, observations at the Hudson Bay Company's post in 1884 and 1885 showing that frosts occur in every month except July. At this post, the most favorable point for agriculture, some poor potatoes are raised; but the tops are always frozen before they reach maturity.

No timber of commercial value was found near the lake. The waters of the Mistassini, as well as those of the adjoining large lakes, are full of fish, principally lake-trout, river-trout, white-fish, pike, pickerel, and suckers,



all of good size and fine quality. These fish are caught in great numbers by the Indians and by the Hudson Bay Company's people.

The Indians, about 125 in all, belong to the Mistassini tribe of the Algonkin family. They barter with the Company the skins and furs which they obtain during the winter; but they depend for subsistence on the supplies furnished at the post, there being no deer in the country. Most of them can read and write the Cree character, and they all profess Christianity, though they mingle with it their old beliefs and practices.

A missionary visits them from Hudson Bay every two or three years to perform the ceremonies of marriage and christening. During his absences the church service is conducted by one of the Indians.

This report effectually disposes of the stories about the vast size of this lake, longer and wider, it was maintained until very lately, than Lake Superior itself. Its area is found to be in reality about one fifth that of Lake Ontario.

Mexican Geographical Society.—It is gratifying to know that this society intends to resume the publication of its *Boletin*, which has been suspended since 1882. The volumes already printed are most valuable.

Lake Nicaragua and the Canal.—Under this heading Ausland, of Stuttgart, gives in its number 52, for 1886, a portion of a study of the line for the projected Nicaragua Canal by Engineer Ronfaut. It is not said whether Mr. Ronfaut undertook his study for his own satisfaction, or on behalf of Ausland, or as the agent of some government or company; and the matter is com-

paratively unimportant, in the presence of the study itself, which contains a really surprising amount of misinformation.

Mr. Ronfaut says the lake is ill-fitted for navigation, on account of the peninsulas, volcanoes, and rocks which fill it. In this opinion he is singular, and sets himself in opposition to the unanimous testimony of all the competent men who have studied the lake, and declare it to be a noble inland sea.

The trade-winds, he says, prevail for a part of the year, but there are complete calms of from two to five days' duration, followed by storms as terrible as those of the English Channel.

The facts are that the trade-winds blow almost throughout the year, from the east, northeast, and southeast during the dry season, and from the southeast in the rainy There is an occasional calm of a day or two, and sometimes, in June or October, the wind hauls to the southwest, with heavy rain for a week or ten days. is the description of the weather given by all who have lived in Nicaragua, and notably by Dr. Earl Flint, of Rivas, who has been a resident of the country for thirty-Dr. Bransford, a surgeon of the U.S. Navy, quotes, in the New York Sanitarian, of February 22, 1883, a memorandum of the U.S. Signal Office with regard to this region, as follows: "Exempt from hurricanes and whirlwinds, owing to the constant movement of air across the Isthmus from the trade-winds, although light in rainy season."

Mr. Ronfaut admires the scenery near Lake Nicaragua, but he says there is nothing to eat in the country, and that water is not to be had except by paying for it. With so

many storms as he describes there should be water; and when he says there is nothing fit to eat he means, no doubt, nothing that seems to suit his own presumably peculiar tastes.

Other strangers in Nicaragua find beef, all kinds of vegetables, tropical fruits, sugar, chocolate, and coffee everywhere within reach at ridiculously low prices.

Timber, says Mr. Ronfaut, is abundant, but so costly, on account of the bad roads, that it is practically useless. The fact is that the internal communications in Nicaragua are fairly good. There are many and well-kept cartroads, besides the lakes and the rivers. It is sometimes cheaper to use imported lumber at the seaports; but everywhere else the excellent native wood can be had for the mere cost of cutting it.

The question of health is an important one. Mr. Ronfaut says that the climate of the Pacific coast is unfavorable to Europeans, that San Juan del Sur is in especially bad repute, that the valley of the San Juan river is deadly and fever-stricken, and that Greytown is one of the most unhealthy ports of the western world.

Dr. Bransford, the surgeon already quoted, says: "There are, of course, to be expected malarial troubles, but in few States of the Union are the lowlands free from the same class of diseases. . . . The strong and almost constant movement of the air in this section prevents that stagnation which, in a damp, tropical country is accompanied by accumulations of malarial poison."

Dr. Bransford was in Nicaragua with a surveying party of forty-five, many of them seamen, a proverbially reckless class, for 6½ months in 1872–73.

The average roll was 36. There was no death. One

officer had a sun-stroke, and there was one case of chronic dysentery, contracted before the patient joined the expedition. There was a marked absence of the bowel complaints for which the tropics are noted; and the natives were found to be remarkably healthy.

Dr. Bransford says in conclusion what the experience of so many confirms: "He is convinced that most of the cases of fearful mortality recorded of expeditions in the tropics were the results of gross ignorance and carelessness. Men cannot live in Central America as they would in New York, nor can they live in New York as they would at the North Pole."

Not every one visits Central America or the North Pole, but all men live through the year, and no one of them pretends to live in summer as he does in winter.

It may be satisfactory to Mr. Ronfaut to read what Dr. Bransford says of the deadly Greytown: "On the beach near Greytown, but away from the quarters, should be established a hospital, which would be an excellent sanitarium at certain seasons for men who break down, working inland."

Mr. Ronfaut is quite certain that earthquakes would shatter and dislocate the locks and the bed of a canal in Nicaragua. He would be a bold man who should set a limit to the power of earthquakes; and it is true that Nicaragua does not seem to be more exempt from these convulsions than most other portions of the earth's surface. Does Mr. Ronfaut know of any region in which engineering works are safe from the disturbing operations of natural forces?

The earthquake of Sept. 6, 1882, which was so destructive at Panama, has left no traces in Nicaragua; but if

Mr. Ronfaut's theory of earthquakes is correct it is his duty to explain why the blackened and weakened ruins of Granada, in Nicaragua, burned during Walker's foray in 1855, are still standing as they stood then.

The evidences of an imagination, overheated, possibly, by the dread of fever and of wild beasts, abound in Engineer Ronfaut's narrative. He discovered sharks in Lake Nicaragua; and he evidently mistook the marks of weathering on the houses of Managua for cracks made by earthquakes. Throughout Nicaragua there are to be found many stone dams, indigo vats, and other structures in stone and rubble, built during the Spanish domination and in perfect condition at this day.

Mr. Ronfaut has gloomy forebodings with regard to the future of Nicaragua. He asserts that the level of the lakes is sinking rapidly, and that the day is not far distant when they will be dried up. The river San Juan, he says, is becoming less and less navigable and must before long cease to exist.

This melancholy state of things is due, he conceives, to two causes: the rapid destruction of the forests, and the porous nature of the volcanic soil, through which the water of the lakes runs as through a gigantic sieve.

Mr. Ronfaut's sympathetic nature does him infinite credit, but the case is, perhaps, less hopeless than he thinks. He has told us that the people of Nicaragua live upon bananas and have no industries. It is not easy to understand how, under such circumstances, the forests of the country should be cut down, more or less rapidly; and it seems to contradict all known natural laws that Lake Nicaragua should ever have come into existence in a soil which cannot hold water.

Mr. Ronfaut's reasoning, or his memory, or both, may be at fault. The people who live in Nicaragua know nothing of the ruin that awaits them. The wharves built by the Spaniards on the shores of the lake are in use to-day, without any noticeable change in the depth of water; the extreme rise and fall of Lake Nicaragua, within the range of four to five feet from the end of the dry season to the end of the rainy season, has remained unchanged from 1850, when the first accurate surveys for a ship-canal were made by Col. Childs, to the present time; and the careful gaugings of the river San Juan, made at corresponding dates during these thirty-seven years, fail to show any diminution or marked fluctuations in the volume and flow of its waters.

No intelligent person, acquainted with the fact that the San Juan is the only outlet of a water-shed of 2,400 square miles, will expect to see it disappear.

The clearing of the harbor at Greytown and the construction of proper works there and at Brito present no unusual difficulties, and call for no extraordinary outlay of funds.

Commander Taylor on the Nicaragua Canal.—In Petermanns Mitteilungen, Band 32, No. 11, Commander Taylor is made to say that the chief superiority of the canal by way of Nicaragua over the Panama Canal consists in the absence of calms on the Pacific at the terminus of the former. A careful re-reading of Commander Taylor's address in this Society's Bulletin No 2, for 1886, will show that the notice in the Mitteilungen omits several of the points established by him and, so far, fails to do him justice.

The address made it clear:

That the cutting of the Nicaragua Canal presented no unusual engineering problem;

That the canal could be made, on the most liberal estimates, for \$75,000,000;

That the revenue of the canal, on a moderate estimate of the shipping both ways, and at the average rate paid on the Suez Canal, would yield a return of sixteen per cent. on the total capital invested, after deducting cost of maintenance and working expenses;

That the great fresh-water lake gave to the route through Nicaragua a ready-made water-way of ninety miles in length, an inexhaustible reservoir, harbors, and anchorage grounds for the fleets of the world, ample sites for depots, dock-yards, coaling stations, storehouses, and hospitals on the lofty islands, and, always ready, a natural, effective, and inexpensive remedy for the fouling of ships' bottoms;

That vessels entering the Pacific from the Nicaragua Canal would not be delayed by calms.

ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.—The Argentine government has just established in Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna, New York, Brussels, and Berne, bureaux for the purpose of furnishing gratuitously every kind of information concerning the Republic, its laws, resources, condition, progress, commerce, finances, and industries.

Each bureau is provided with a library of publications, official and private, besides maps, views, plans, etc., and the principal journals of Buenos-Aires and other cities; and will maintain, also, a permanent exhibition of the products, natural and manufactured, of the country.

Dr. D. F. King has been appointed director in charge of the New York Bureau.

Cartography of the Egyptian Soudan.—Under this heading *Le Mouvement Géographique*, of Brussels, publishes in the number of Jan'y 30, 1887, on the somewhat doubtful authority of the *Bosphore Egyptien*, the following story:

When the English army took possession of the citadel at Cairo, the maps, plans, and military archives there found were transported to the building occupied by the Bureau of Accounts for the Soudan. Here they were classified and catalogued.

Last June Gen. Hallam Parr, finding the rooms in which these documents were kept to his liking, gave directions to Maj. Mantell, who was in charge of the maps and plans, to give up his rooms and to take advantage of the occasion, when he moved, to destroy all the useless papers. Maj. Mantell ordered, in consequence, and carried out the complete destruction of the greater part of the documents entrusted to his care.

This is an almost irreparable loss, many of these maps covering former Egyptian provinces which are now inaccessible. The collection having been disposed of, the head of the department suppressed the division of "Maps and Plans," provided for in the budget, and effected in this way a retrenchment, if not a reform.

Le Mouvement Géographique adds that its own private advices confirm the story told by the Bosphore Egyptien, incredible as such an act of vandalism seems, when reported of an English officer.

Some idea of the treasures thus lost to geographical

science may be had by looking through the summary, elsewhere given, of the explorations made, principally by American officers, under the direction of Stone-Pasha, Chief-of-Staff of the Egyptian army; and these formed but a part of the collection in the citadel of Cairo.

Fernando Po.—In the Bulletin of the Paris Geographical Society, M. L. Janikowski gives some curious particulars about the island of Fernando Po, which lies in the Bight of Biafra, at about 20 miles from the mainland. Being but 3° N. of the equator, the island enjoys a healthful climate, which is due to its great elevation. The extreme length from N. to S. is but 35 miles, and the breadth 14, while the interior is a mass of mountains, of which the loftiest, known to the English as Mt. Clarence, and to the Spaniards as Isabel, rises to the height of more than 10,000 feet.

Less than fifty years ago it was in the power of the English, who must occasionally regret having allowed it to slip from them into the hands of Spain. M. Janikowski praises the beauty and the fertility of the island, which produces coffee, cacao, quinquina, every variety of fruit, and a great many medicinal plants, besides a number of very virulent poisons.

The natives, who should know best, call each other Boobis, a word equivalent in their language to *friends*. They number about 30,000, and their manners and customs are, to say the least, original. In their own villages they dispense with clothing, other than the shell bracelets and necklaces of which they are very fond; but when they enter the town of Sta. Isabel they add a cloth or skin apron. They are great hunters, and have a military

organization of their own, by means of which they enforce a rude justice throughout the island. There are three classes, the lowest, a middle class, and a privileged, or patrician, class, to which any *Boobi* may be chosen who can give a great dinner with abundant brandy and palm wine. When the feast is over, the guests solemnly elect their host a *butuku*, or noble.

The religion of this singular people resembles nothing so much as what is popularly called spiritualism. are no temples, no fetiches, no images. The people come together in a grotto, of which there are many in the island, and seat themselves in profound silence. once, a voice cries: "Now, I open the window," and a bright light from above fills the grotto, and the priest is seen standing in front of the people. Each one, in turn, approaches with his offering and asks for an answer to his question: whether he will have good luck on his voyage, whether his father was not poisoned, and so on. The priest turns to the wall and puts the question to the oomo, or great spirit, in a peculiar tongue. He then falls to the ground in a kind of convulsion, and a loud voice cries out some words, which are the answer, as interpreted by the priest. An English negro, who was present on one of these occasions, told M. Janikowski that the oomo asked him in good English what he wanted. replied that he wished to know something about the death of his father; and the answer came to him at once, with some details concerning his family.

Marriage is a simple affair. If a girl pleases the eye of a rich man, he sends an agent to throw a shell necklace over her neck, and she is won without more ado.

Poor men are obliged to make several visits to the

parents, leaving always a present, and one day the girl is told to get up and go to the lover's house. Here she is received by an old woman, and the marriage is made.

Family ties are not very strong. M. Janikowski tells of an only son whose mother died, leaving him a house and some small debts. The son refused to pay the debts, and was brought before the Spanish court by the credit-When asked where he was born, and the names of his parents, he denied any knowledge of them; and being reminded that he had just buried his mother, he declared that the dead woman was not his mother but a stranger, with whose debts he had no concern. "In that case," said the judge, "what right have you in her house? You must leave it at once, and it must be sold to satisfy her "Oh! no," cried the man, "now that I rememcreditors." ber, the deceased was my mother, and I will pay."

M. Janikowski affirms that this case is but one of many which prove the lack of natural affections among these people. It is not surprising, under these circumstances, to learn that poisons are habitually employed to remove wives and children and husbands, who persist in living.

When a death occurs, all but the nearest relatives leave the house. The poor are buried without any ceremony or attendance. The body of a butuku, or rich man, is dressed in his best—gigantic round hat, bracelets, and all. The wall of the house is then broken down, and the body is taken out through the opening and into the forest, where a deep hole has been dug, covered at the bottom with bags of rice, in the middle of which is placed a semi-circular seat taken from a canoe. Here the body is made to sit with the hands on a tree set up immediately before it. The earth is then thrown in, amid the discharge of fire-

arms; and the tree, projecting above the ground, marks the place of the grave.

It has been said that the island is, on the whole, a healthy place, but it has its diseases, and to one of these M. Janikowski gives the mysterious English name of yellow gender.

To a race of self-confessed Boobis any kind of grammatical distinction may very well seem to be nothing less than a visitation of God; but other men find it difficult to form a conception of a yellow gender, or a purple declension, or a crimson syntax.

M. Janikowski is, probably, not familiar with spoken English. The name he heard and ought to have written was, undoubtedly, *yellow jaundice*.

The Sharpless Portraits.—The facts concerning these portraits cannot be too widely known, since it equally concerns all men, whatever their special pursuits may be, to aid in defending and maintaining the integrity of historical records and monuments.

A few years before the death of Washington an English painter, named Sharpless, visited America and made many portraits, chiefly in crayon, of prominent persons, including Washington and his wife. Some of these portraits were carried by the painter to England, but two undoubted works of his—profiles of Washington—have long been known here.

In 1882, three pictures, a profile and a full face of Washington and a profile of Lady Washington, were exhibited at the Boston Art Museum as the work of Sharpless.

In 1886 these portraits were again placed on exhibition

in Boston, and it was hoped that the government might purchase them.

Under these circumstances the Massachusetts Historical Society appointed a committee, of which Mr. Francis Parkman, the historian, was chairman, to inquire into the authenticity of the paintings.

The committee reported on the 13th of January, 1887: That the profile likeness exhibited bore no resemblance whatever to the two genuine Sharpless profiles of Washington;

That the full face represented a man in the prime of life, whereas Sharpless never saw Washington till he was an old man, and did not paint his portrait till 1796, only two (?) years before his death;

That when the portraits were on exhibition in 1882, it was observed that the eyes of Washington were brown, and that those of Lady Washington were blue. When the pictures returned to America in 1886, the eyes of Washington were found to be blue, and those of Lady Washington brown.

The explanations offered on these points by Major Walter, the Englishman who exhibited the portraits, did not satisfy the committee.

The evidence as to the genuineness of these "inestimable treasures" was a pamphlet by Major Walter, containing letters, the originals of which were said to be no longer in existence. The most important of these were: a letter bearing the signature of Washington, extracts from letters ascribed to Sharpless, and a letter signed by Robert Cary, Washington's London agent not long before the Revolution.

Cary's letter was found to bear a startling resemblance

to a well-known passage of a speech delivered in 1814 by Charles Phillips, the Irish orator; while the letter of Washington and the Sharpless extracts displayed a familiarity, little less than miraculous, with Major Walter's own cast of mind and inadmissible English. As with Washington and Sharpless, so with many others—Gallatin, Trumbull, Cadwallader Colden, Washington Irving, Emerson, and Hawthorne. Each of these, individual and recognizable elsewhere, yielded up character and language and intellect at the touch of Major Walter's omnific hand. It overtaxes even the resources of classic Latin to express his merit:

Nil tetigit quod non majoravit.

GAZETTEER OF THE BRITISH ISLES.—This Gazetteer, edited by Mr. John Bartholomew, F.R.G.S., and published by Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh, is a marvel of compactness and thoroughness.

The two questions which first occur to any one who consults a gazetteer for information respecting a place are, as Mr. Bartholomew says: "Where is it?" and "What of it?"; and it would not be easy to name any place in the United Kingdom concerning which this volume is silent.

The wealth of illustration by means of maps is ample. There are maps and charts giving the Heights of Land and Depths of Sea, the Temperature, Rainfall, River Basins, and Tides; Vital and Industrial Maps, showing the Density of Population, the Birth and Death Rates, the Industries and their Distribution, the Arable and Pasture Lands, etc.; Parliamentary and Railway Maps, besides the General Maps of each kingdom, and one

showing the Light-houses on all the Coasts; and the appendices contain a great body of valuable statistics.

The typographical execution of the work is worthy of its intrinsic merit.

GEOGRAPHY AT OXFORD.—A Readership in Geography has been endowed by the University of Oxford for the next five years, with an annual stipend of £300 to the Reader. So far as is known, this is the first definite recognition of the study of Geography by a College or University, among the English-speaking peoples; and it was eminently fit that Oxford should lead the way.

A SITE FOR AN OBSERVATORY.—Prof. Edward C. Pickering, Director of the Harvard College Observatory, calls attention to the will of the late Uriah A. Boyden, by which property, now exceeding two hundred and thirty thousand dollars in value, was left for the purpose of astronomical research "at such an elevation as to be free, so far as practicable, from the impediments to accurate observations which occur in the observatories now existing, owing to atmospheric influences."

The fund has been turned over to Harvard College, and the proposed researches will be made under the general management of the Observatory attached to it, and aided by its means, in addition to the fund itself.

For the new permanent Observatory a very great altitude will be advisable, in a position easy of access, and where the station can be occupied at all seasons of the year. A location in the Southern Hemisphere will be preferable. Southern stars, invisible in Europe and the United States, have been less observed than the northern

stars, and by the aid of a southern station investigations can be extended upon a uniform system to all parts of the sky. Information is asked for regarding suitable localities and should give the following details:

- 1. Latitude and longitude. Distance and direction from a town or well-known point. Height, and how determined.
- 2. Peak, pass, or table-land. Character of surface: ledge, broken rock, gravel, or covered with trees, shrubs, or grass. Prevalence of snow in summer, and period during which snow in winter might obstruct access, or occasion inconvenience or damage. Proximity of wood and water.
- 3. Means of access, distance from and height above nearest railroad station, wagon-road, bridle-road, or footpath. Time of ascent and descent. Nearest post-office and telegraph-station, and distances from station. Nearest point of road kept open in winter.
- 4. Observation of rainfall at different seasons. Proportion of sky covered with cloud at different hours and seasons. These observations are desired at sunset, sunrise, and late in the evening. Observations may be made of a distant mountain peak, evening observations being confined to moonlight nights. Observation of barometer and thermometer desired. Information wanted regarding the prevalence of very high winds; the presence of dust, haze, or smoke from forest fires, rendering distant points invisible; and all meteorological phenomena affecting the value of the station for astronomical purposes. Duration of rainy or cloudy season, if any; and regular recurrence of clouds, thunder-storms, or wind at any given hour of the day.
- 5. Sketches or photographs of the proposed location, and of points on the road; also of the view.

Correspondence to be addressed to Prof. Pickering, at Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.

Relief of Emin Pasha.—Twelve years ago Dr. Schnitzler, an Austrian physician and scientist, entered the Egyptian service as Emin Bey, and was made surgeon-general under Gordon, then Governor of the Egyptian Soudan.

To his extensive scientific acquirements Emin Bey added remarkable gifts as a linguist, and he showed, in his relations with the people, and especially in three delicate and dangerous missions to native chiefs, so much tact and discretion that Gordon appointed him, in 1878, Governor-General of the Egyptian Equatorial Provinces.

These provinces, to which Dr. Felkin generously ascribes an extent little less than that of Europe, were in any case very large. Emin Bey established posts at forty principal points, constructed roads, introduced the regular cultivation of useful plants, maintained peace and order, and began the instruction of the people in the arts of civilization.

Communication with his government was cut off early in 1883 by what English authorities call the rebellion of the Soudan.

Emin Bey had then with him but two European companions, both experienced African travellers, Dr. Junker, a Russian scientist, and Capt. Casati, formerly an officer in the Italian army.

When the English campaign in the Soudan came to a disastrous end, it was supposed that all signs of the Egyptian domination in that remote territory had disappeared; but late in 1886 Dr. Junker suddenly returned to the outer world with the news that Emin Bey and Ca-

sati were shut up, with their faithful negro soldiers, in Wadelai, one of the fortified posts on the Nile, about fifty miles from the northern end of Lake Albert Nyanza. Mahehi, a post on the lake itself, is possibly still held by Emin Bey; and he had on the lake last summer two steamers, besides four iron life-boats, each capable of containing sixty men.

A private expedition was immediately organized in London for his relief. It was aided by a grant of £10,000 from the Egyptian government, which at the same time promoted the much-enduring Austrian to the rank of Pasha.

Mr. Stanley, the most competent of men for the task, left London on the 21st of January for Zanzibar to take charge of the expedition. He engaged in Egypt and in Eastern Africa a large force of guards and porters, besides a body of sixty Soudanese soldiers.

With these he reached Cape Town on the 9th of March, and left the next day for the Congo, where he expected to arrive by the 18th.

From the mouth of the Congo to the Albert Nyanza is not less than 2,400 miles, and of these 900 must be made by land. The daily march in such an unknown country can hardly amount to 10 miles, and it will be wonderful if the expedition comes in sight of the lake before the 1st of August.

Can Emin Pasha hold out till then? That is the question; and there is no one who can answer it.

The situation is so like that of Gordon at Khartoum that men naturally fear the worst. There has been, at least, no delay in the present instance, and Stanley will do every thing that can be done by a leader; but he may arrive too late, though a telegram of March 14th from Zanzibar reported Emin Pasha well on the 24th of January. He had made an ineffectual effort to reach the coast, and had been forced to return to Wadelai.

NORTH ATLANTIC CURRENTS.—A report presented to the French Academy of Sciences on the 10th of January, 1887, gives the results of the Prince of Monaco's experiments on the Atlantic currents, in the years 1885 and 1886. The experiment of 1885 has already been noticed in the BULLETIN. The floats thrown into the sea on that occasion, near the Azores, numbered 169, of which 14 were recovered, showing a drift in a S. E. direction, at the rate of 3.83 miles per 24 hours.

In 1886, 510 floats were sent out much nearer to the French coast.

Nine of these have been found in positions showing also a S. E. drift, with velocities varying from 5.80 to 6.45 miles.

These experiments have not greatly added to our knowledge of ocean currents.

To the North Pole by Land.—Col. Gilder has given up for the present his attempt to reach the North Pole by way of Hudson Bay. He now intends to take the next Hudson Bay boat, or a whaling-vessel, and to join his companion Griffith at Nottingham Island, and renew his effort.

An expedition very similar to Col. Gilder's has been begun by Mr. Alexander McArthur, who left Winnipeg on the 13th of February to push to the northward along the west coast of Hudson Bay, and through King William Land and Boothia to Grinnell Land. Mr. McArthur proposes to be gone three or four years.

Rainfall on the Land of the Globe.—In the Scottish Geographical Magazine for February, 1887, Mr. John Murray has a paper on the rainfall of the globe and its relation to rivers. The elaborate tables given by Mr. Murray bring together at a glance the results of an immense amount of work.

He estimates the total rainfall at 29,350 cubic miles, of which 2,243 cubic miles fall on the inland drainage areas, such as the Caspian, the Sahara, and the like. These inland areas occupy 11,486,350 square miles, and correspond in locality very closely with the rainless regions of the earth—those, that is to say, in which the annual rainfall is less than 10 inches. The area of these regions is 12,200,000 square miles. The inland drainage areas, the rainless regions, and the great desert regions largely coincide, and are situated in two belts around the world, one in the Northern Hemisphere, nearly between latitudes 30° and 40°, the other in the Southern Hemisphere, nearly between 20° and 30° of latitude.

The primary cause of the rainless, desert, and inland drainage areas is to be traced to the fact that they are situated where the winds blow from colder to warmer latitudes, and from off land, and not from the ocean.

None of the rain falling on the inland drainage areas ever reaches the sea by means of rivers. There are left, therefore, 44,211,050 square miles of land which drain into the ocean. Of these, 26,400,000 drain into the Atlantic or its tributary basins, and of the 27,110 cubic miles of rain that fall on the land draining into the oceans, 15,788 cubic miles, or more than half, fall on the Atlantic area.

The Pacific drainage area receives 5,007 cubic miles,

and that of the Indian Ocean 4,379 cubic miles, while the rain and snow falling on the Antarctic continent are estimated at 1,688 cubic miles.

The proportion of rainfall on a river basin to the amount of water discharged at its mouth varies according to the geographical position of the river. In European rivers, between a third and a fourth of the rainfall reaches the sea. The Mississippi discharges one fourth of the rain it receives into the Caribbean Sea, a performance which displays, on the part of the river or of Mr. Murray, a wholly unexpected contempt for the acquired rights of the Gulf of Mexico.

One half of the rainfall on the basin of the Yukon finds its way to the ocean.

In tropical or sub-tropical rivers the average discharge is about one fifth of the rainfall, though the Nile, it must be noted, delivers only  $\frac{1}{37}$  of the amount received.

The figures relating to some of the great river-basins are interesting.

The Amazon, with an area of 2,229,900 square miles, receives 2,833 cubic miles of rain. The Congo comes next with 1,540,800 square miles, and 1,213 cubic miles; then the Nile, with an area of 1,293,050 square miles and a rainfall of 892 cubic miles; then the Mississippi, with 1,285,300 square miles, and 673 cubic miles of rain; and the La Plata, with 994,900 square miles of area, and a rainfall of 904 cubic miles.

The composition of river water has been estimated by Mr. Murray from the analysis of 19 rivers. According to these each cubic mile of river water that reaches the sea carries with it 762,587 tons of matter in solution and suspension. The 6,524 cubic miles carried into the ocean

every year take with them, therefore, no less than 4,974,-967,588 tons of solid matter.

THE LONGEST RIVER.—A posthumous paper by Dr. G. A. Von Klöden, published in the Zeitschrift of the Berlin Gesellschaft für Erdkunde, vol. 20, part vi., gave the length of 376 rivers in different parts of the world, calculated in kilometres. According to this, the longest river was the Nile, with 6,470 kilometres, and the next the Mississippi-Missouri, with 5,882 kilometres.

The Russian general, Von Tillo, revising these calculations, gives the first place to the Mississippi-Missouri, with 6,750 kilometres, and the second to the Nile, with the 6,470 kilometres assigned it by Von Klöden.

The two authorities agree as to some other great rivers. To the Ta-Kiang, or Yang-Tse-Kiang, they give 5,083 kilometres, to the Amazon 4,929, to the Yenisei-Selenga 4,750, to the Congo 4,640, to the Mackenzie 4,615, and to the Amoor 4,378.

After these come, according to Von Klöden, the Cambodia with 4,240 kilometres, the Ob with 4,229, the Hoang-Ho with 4,192, and the Lena with 4,036.

The difficulties in the way of exact measurement are so many that there must always remain some uncertainty as to the relative figures.

The Name of Celebes.—According to the Bulletin of the Lille Geographical Society, Mr. Van Hoëvell, Dutch Assistant-Resident at Gorontalo, says that the European navigators gave to Celebes the name it now bears from the words Sooloo besi, in order to distinguish it from the other Sooloo islands. The word besi (written bûsi in

Craufurd's dictionary) means *iron*, and the western coast of Celebes is rich in this metal.

The descent from Sooloo besi to the present form is easy enough, and the etymology so far recommends itself, though the process by which it is reached is depressingly like that which has given us, among other wild guesses, the derivation of Canada from Acá nada, and California from Calida fornax.

THE RIVERS OF EASTERN EUROPE.—M. Venukoff, in a recent study on the Russian rivers, shows that the problem of maintaining them in a navigable condition is very similar to the one presented by the rivers of the United States. The two principal obstacles to be met in both cases are, the closing of the rivers by ice in the winter, and the breaking up in the spring.

In Western Europe, the Rhine, the Thames, the Seine, or the Loire, may be covered with ice once in ten or fifteen years, for five or ten days; very rarely, for three weeks.

In Russia, on the contrary, all the rivers, excepting those of Transcaucasia, are closed every year for several weeks or months. M. Venukoff gives from M. Rykatcheff's work a table showing the number of days during which navigation remains open on the following rivers:

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      Bug, at Brest-Litovsk
      .
      254 days.

      Dnieper, at Kiev
      .
      .
      270 "

      " at Krementschug
      .
      .
      275 "

      " at Kherson
      .
      .
      .
      .
      .
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Kherson, it must be remarked, is in the latitude of Nantes, where the Loire never freezes, and Kiev is almost due east from Coblentz, where the Rhine is sometimes, though rarely, frozen for a very few days.

Comparisons between the rivers of Western and Eastern Russia show that the time of open navigation diminishes regularly towards the east, all other things being equal.

The force of the current is always to be taken into account since very rapid rivers often remain open even in high northern latitudes.

The melting of the ice in the spring is accompanied, in Russia, with peculiar dangers. Generally, the breaking up does not occur at the same time on the whole course of the river, especially when this flows with the meridian. The Volga, for instance, is free from ice at Astrakhan about the 16th of March, but remains bound till the 26th of April at Gorodetz, 2,300 kilometres up stream; so that the melting lasts through forty days. Moreover, the snows are so abundant that the thaw is always accompanied with tremendous freshets; and these shorten still more the period of navigation, especially on the two principal rivers of European Russia, the Volga and the Dnieper.

The freshets in the basin of the Volga are the most formidable, and observations show that at Samara the spring flood rises to twelve metres above the level of the frozen river, and that on the Oka, a branch of the Volga, the difference between the winter and the spring level at Kaluga is but a fraction less than fourteen metres. In the west the freshets are comparatively mild, the Niemen and the Vistula never rising quite five metres above their ordinary level. In the west, it is observed, the melting is continuous even during the winter, while in the east it comes on all at once after a long period of intense cold.

Obstuary.—A communication from the Geographical Society of Berne brings intelligence of the death, on the 22d of February, 1887, of Gustav Reymond-Le Brun, Chief Secretary of the Society and Editor of its Yearly Review. Herr Reymond-Le Brun was an indefatigable and conscientious worker, and his loss is deeply felt by his associates.

Dr. Gustav Kirchenpauer, presiding Burgomaster of Hamburg, and first President of the Geographical Society of that city, died suddenly in the night of the 3d-4th of March, 1887.

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